

Sūrah Tūr

Central Theme and Relationship with the Previous Sūrah

This is the third *sūrah* of this group. In both the previous *sūrahs* – Qāf and Dhāriyāt – intellectual and historical arguments as well as those from the world within man and that out outside him are mentioned to substantiate death and the reward and punishment which will take place on the Day of Judgement. The style is general ie. it includes both reward and punishment. Consequently in Sūrah Dhāriyāt the following verse represents its central theme: (٥١: ٥-٦) **إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَصَادِقٌ وَإِنَّ الدِّينَ لَوَاقِعٌ** (the punishment you are being threatened with is true and indeed reward and punishment shall certainly take place, (61:5-6)). While explaining these verses, I have written that they comprise both reward and punishment whether it relates to mercy or to torment. In this *sūrah*, the aspect of torment is highlighted more. Consequently, after pointing towards historical arguments as well as arguments which relate to the world around man, the Quraysh are threatened very clearly in the words: (٨-٧) **إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ مَا لَهُ مِنْ دَافِعٍ** (indeed, the punishment of your Lord is certain to come; no one shall be able to avert it, (52:7-8)). It is this threat which also occupies the status of the complement of oath and also signifies its central theme.

Analysis of the Discourse

With relation to its meaning, the *sūrah* can be divided into the following three sections:

Verses (1-16)

This section forms the introductory part of the *sūrah*. The headstrong and obstinate people of Quraysh are first severely warned by citing certain historical and universal facts as evidence that the punishment which they have been threatened with is certain to come. They should not ask to hasten it and if they do not change their attitude, it will definitely alight and no one will be able to avert it. The next few verses draw a vivid picture of the Day of Judgement, with a brief description of the dreadful fate of those who had denied it.

Verses (17-28)

A portrayal of the favours of the life of bliss the believers will be blessed with in contrast with that of the disbelievers is made. A special favour which is highlighted here is that the Almighty will reunite those who brought up their children in accordance with the requisites of the Hereafter with their children even if these children were not entitled to this high level as regards their own deeds. For this union, those who deserve a high rank and level will not be demoted; instead people deserving a lower rank will be promoted to a higher one. Basically, the fate of a person will be decided according to his deeds; therefore, neither a reduction will take place in a person's deeds nor will a faithless person be able to enter Paradise; indeed, the Almighty's blessings will be for the believers.

Verses (29-49)

In the concluding part of the *sūrah*, the Prophet (sws) is comforted that he should not pay any heed to the excuses invented by the disbelievers in order to deny his prophethood. Ignoring their attitude, he should keep on discharging his duty of reminding people of the truth so that those who are mindful are able to adopt the right path and those who insist on remaining on the wrong path have no excuse but defiance to remain so.

In the twelfth verse, the attitude of the adversaries of indulging in pleasantries and toying with the truth was referred to. Here they are dealt with in detail and silenced on this behaviour.

Rebellious people are warned that very soon the time will come when all their schemes will be shattered, and before the torment of the Final Day, they will encounter another torment in this world also.

The Prophet (sws) is comforted that he should patiently await his Lord's decision, and should be aware that he is under His direct protection.

He should augment this patience through prayers, especially the night and early morning ones.

Text and Translation**Section I: Verses (1-28)**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَالطُّورِ (١) وَكِتَابٍ مَسْطُورٍ (٢). فِي رَقٍّ مَنشُورٍ (٣) وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ (٤) وَالسَّافِرِ الْمَرْفُوعِ (٥). وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ (٦). إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ (٧). مَا لَهُ مِنْ دَافِعٍ (٨). يَوْمَ

تَمُورُ السَّمَاءِ مَوْرًا (٩). وَتَسِيرُ الْجِبَالُ سَيْرًا (١٠). قَوْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ (١١). الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي خَوْضٍ يَلْعَبُونَ (١٢). يَوْمَ يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى نَارٍ جَهَنَّمَ دَعَاً (١٣). هَذِهِ النَّارُ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ (١٤). أَفَسِحْرٌ هَذَا أَمْ أَنْتُمْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ (١٥) اصْلَوْهَا فَاصْبِرُوا أَوْ لَا تَصْبِرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّمَا تُحْزَنُونَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (١٦). إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَعِيمٍ (١٧). فَاكِهِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ وَوَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ (١٨). كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (١٩). مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَى سُرُرٍ مَصْصُوفَةٍ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينٍ (٢٠). وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُمْ مِنْ عَمَلِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ (٢١). وَأَمَدَدْنَاهُمْ بِفَاكِهَةٍ وَلَحْمٍ مِمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ (٢٢). يَتَنَزَّعُونَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا لَا لَغْوٌ فِيهَا وَلَا تَأْنِيهِمْ (٢٣). وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ غِلْمَانٌ لَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لُؤْلُؤٌ مَكْنُونٌ (٢٤). وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ (٢٥). قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ (٢٦). فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَانَا عَذَابَ السَّمُومِ (٢٧). إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلُ نَدْعُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَرُّ الرَّحِيمُ (٢٨).

In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the ever Merciful.

The Mount of Sinai bears witness and the scripture inscribed on a parchment unrolled. And the populated house and the lofty roof and the overflowing seas bear witness that indeed the punishment of your Lord is certain to come. No one shall be able to avert it. (1-8)

Remember the Day when the sky will totter and reel, and the mountains will fly hither and thither. Therefore, woe, on that Day, be to the deniers, who, toying around, engage in pleasantries. The Day when they shall be shoved and driven towards the Fire of Hell: This is the Hell you had been denying. Is this magic or are you blind? Enter into it. Whether you bear it or not, it is alike for you. You are being rewarded with you had been doing. (9-16)

Indeed, the righteous shall be in gardens and bliss, enjoying what their Lord would have granted them and enjoying the fact that their Lord has preserved them from the torment of Hell-fire. Eat and drink with relish as reward for the deeds you have done. They will be reclining on thrones arranged in rows and We would have wed them with large eyed houris. (17-20)

And those who had accepted faith, and their children had followed them in their faith, We shall unite their children with them and not even slightly diminish the reward of their deeds. Each individual shall be in pledge for his earning. And We shall continue to provide them the fruits and meat they like. Such cups of wine shall pass between them which

will be free from sin and idle talk. And there shall wait upon them young boys like pearls preserved. (21-24)

They will turn towards one another asking about each other, saying: “Before this, we remained fearful about our families; so the Almighty has been gracious to us and has delivered us from the agony of the punishment of Hell. We used to invoke only Him before. Indeed, He is the keeper of His promises, Ever-Merciful.” (25-28)

Explanation

وَالطُّورِ (١)¹

The word وَ here signifies an oath and I have already explained at an appropriate place in this *tafsīr* that in the light of the research carried out by my mentor Imām Ḥamīd al-Dīn Farāhī in his *Aqsām al-Qur’ān* most oaths mentioned in the Qur’ān are meant to substantiate a claim that is stated as a *muqṣam ‘alayh*. As pointed out earlier, the *muqṣam ‘alayh* here is the verse (٧) إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ (the punishment of your Lord is certain to come). Hence the oath sworn by the mount of Sinai is meant to substantiate this claim. Thus, keeping in view this aspect of the oath, I have translated the first verse as “Tūr bears witness” and in my opinion this translation is more meaningful.

The word Tūr refers to the mount of (Sinai) which has been mentioned in the Qur’ān in various aspects. It is in one of its sacred valleys Ṭuwā that Moses (sws) witnessed divine disclosures while coming back from Midian. It was here that he was blessed with prophethood and was directed to go to the Pharaoh and his people as a warner to them. He was to inform him that if he did not give up his rebellious attitude he, together with his people, would become a target of God’s scourge. After the destruction of the Pharaoh, the Almighty called him to this very mountain to give him the Torah. When in his absence, his people were led astray and got involved in worshipping the calf, it was at the base of this mountain that he brought over the leaders of his people for collective repentance. On this occasion, the Almighty shook the whole mountain and informed the Israelites that if they did not abide by the covenant they were making with the Almighty by receiving His Book, they should remember that it is in His power to crush them below this very mountain.

Because of these multifarious features the mount Tūr is a great historical sign which substantiates this claim and is mentioned after oath. Thus, for this characteristic, it has been sworn by in Sūrah Tīn. I will inshallāh explain there that this oath is sworn to substantiate the claim of

1. The Mount of Sinai bears witness.

reward and punishment referred to here.

Some people have regarded the word **تُور** to refer to a mountain in general. However, this view is not tenable for various reasons. Firstly, because the Qur'ān must be interpreted as per the conventional meanings of its words. It is possible that in the Hebrew and Syriac languages, it has this meaning; however, in Arabic, it is not commonly and conventionally used in this meaning. It is mentioned several times in the Qur'ān, and at each instance is used as a proper noun. Secondly, if it is interpreted to mean a mountain, it will bear no relationship with the *muq̣sam* 'alayh which is essential; otherwise the oath will become out of place.

وَكِتَابٍ مَّسْطُورٍ²

These words refer to the Torah. An evident indication for this is that it is mentioned adjacent to the mountain Tūr and it is known that it was here that the Almighty gave Moses (sws) this Book. The second indication is the expression **رَقٍّ مَّنْشُورٍ**. The word **رَقٍّ** is used for thin parchment which was used for writing in ancient times. It is also evident from history that initially the Torah was written on clean hides which were folded up in the form of a scroll and was spread open at the time of recital. In the presence of these indications, there is no possibility that some other book be implied here. Some people have interpreted it to mean "record". However, this is out of place because presenting this as evidence is only useful in the world to come and not in this world.

The relationship of these words is also very evident with the *muq̣sam* 'alayh. Just as mount Tūr is a historical sign of the divine law of retribution, in a similar manner the Torah is a great historical record which mentions this divine law. Preserved in it are the details of how nations were dealt with by God under this law. A simple reading of this law will show that this law is in force ever since the times of Adam, and this persistent pattern shows that it will continue until the time when a day arrives wherein God's justice will completely and totally manifest itself. On that day, a person who has done the slightest evil will face its punishment and a person who has done the slightest good will be recompensed.

The fact that the word **كِتَابٍ** is not defined by a definite article is meant to heighten its grandeur. The reason for this is that before the Qur'ān, it was the Torah which the Almighty had revealed for the guidance of people and whose basic directives were given by God to Moses (sws) in written form. Before this, most of the guidance given by the Prophets to

2. And the scripture inscribed.

their people was oral in nature. It was with the Torah that writing down all the teachings of the prophets began. For this reason, it is mentioned here with great emphasis. I will explain in the *tafsīrs* of Sūrah Raḥmān and Sūrah ‘Alaq the various aspects of conclusively delivering the truth which as a result of this instruction by the pen have come into being.

فِي رَقٍّ مَّنْشُورٍ³

The word رَقٍّ has been explained above. The fact that this Book is preserved in spread out pages is meant to convey its conclusive communication of the truth: nothing is concealed in it; everything is openly available in its spread out sheets and anyone can read it. He who cannot read it can listen to it being recited. In fact, he has the right to demand from the bearers of this Book to tell and to read out to him what is written in this Book.

Here it needs to be kept in consideration that the people of Arabia would acknowledge the superiority of the People of the Book in religious matters. On this basis, the Qur’ān at many instances has directed them to ask from the People of the Book what they do not know. Moreover, it is also a fact the Torah also recorded the history of Abraham (sws) and Ishmael (sws) and the people of Arabia also claimed that they had inherited from these same forefathers the religion they practiced. So there is a subtle reference in this verse that they can find out from this book whether their forefathers warned them of the Day of reward and punishment or not.

The word مَّنْشُورٍ also carries a subtle aspersion on the Jews of the times of the Prophet (sws). It is mentioned at many instances in the Qur’ān that the Jews would hide many things mentioned in their scriptures. This malady of concealing the truth developed in the Jews in their times of decadence. One of the main reasons for its development was that they did not want people to know of the predictions mentioned in the Torah regarding the advent of the last Prophet (sws). In these predictions, they were threatened that if they denied this prophet, they would invite God’s wrath and be deprived of their position of leadership. By mentioning this word, the Jews are reminded of the real status of the Torah: it was housed in clean and pure spread out pages so that people should read it and understand it and so that all of its pages were always displayed to people; however, because of their wretchedness they concealed the Torah. It was due to this attitude of theirs that Jesus (sws) addressed them in the following words: “You had been given a lamp so that you

3. On a parchment unrolled.

place it at a high place in your home so that its light spreads in the whole house but you have hidden it under a cup.”⁴

وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ (٤)⁵

Generally our exegetes have interpreted this expression to refer to a house in Paradise which to angels has the same status in the heavens as the one given to the Baytullah on this earth for human beings. In my opinion, this view has no bearing on the meaning of this expression. If there is such a house in Paradise, then what weight does its evidence carry in favour of the claim which is presented after this oath? Since our exegetes wrongly think that oaths are always sworn by sacred objects, they try to look for some sacred element in such objects. However, in this regard, the real thing is not the sacredness of the objects of oath but the way they bear evidence on a claim. If reflected thus, one is unable to find such a relationship in this case.

Some people regard this expression to refer to the Baytullāh. This view is more tenable than the first. This is because an oath is sworn on the secure city (بلد أمين) in Sūrah Tīn to substantiate reward and punishment and since the Baytullāh is situated in this secure city, its bearing evidence does carry a meaning. However, the context rejects this view too. The reason for this is that after this, the lofty roof is sworn by. Obviously, this cannot refer to the roof of the Baytullāh. It can only refer to the heavens and our exegetes have also interpreted it thus. If it refers to the heavens, then swearing by the heavens after swearing by the Baytullāh and then swearing by the ocean look somewhat unrelated. It does not carry the harmony and accord which exists between the oaths sworn by the mount Tūr and the written book.

In my opinion, the expression *وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ* refers to this earth extending over which is the roof of the sky. Many arguments can be presented in favour of this opinion.

Firstly, in my opinion, the expression *وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ* is a very apt metaphor for the earth. The Qur’ān, at many instances, has called it *مهادر* and *قرار* etc. Moreover, by referring to the earth as the floor and the sky as the roof, it has very beautifully called their combination a house.

Secondly, after its mention, a reference to the sky clearly shows that it refers to the earth. Wherever in the Qur’ān attention is directed to great signs of the Almighty, the sky and the earth are mentioned together.

Thirdly, at many places, the Qur’ān has directed our attention to the

4. I am unable to locate this quotation from the New Testament. (Translator)

5. And the populated house.

fact that the various sources and resources the Almighty has made available in this earth bear witness to the fact that man is not unaccountable for what he does in this world; he is answerable to God. The word **الْمَعْمُور** refers to the resources found in the earth and, as a necessary corollary of these provisions, to the accountability a person will be liable for after benefiting from these resources.

Fourthly, in Sūrah Dhāriyāt, the previous *sūrah*, it was said: **وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِلْمُوقِنِينَ** (and in the earth and yourselves also are signs for those who have conviction, (51:20) and **وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ** (and there is in the heavens your sustenance also and that too about which you are being threatened with, (51:22)). While explaining these verses, I have alluded to the signs of the heavens and the earth which bear witness to the divine law of retribution and punishment. It is precisely on this premise that evidence is presented here too: only the style is different.

For these reasons, in my opinion, the word **الْبَيِّنَات** refers to the earth and its qualification by the attribute **الْمَعْمُور** alludes to the signs and majesties of God relating to His power, wisdom and providence on the basis of which the Qur'ān at various instances has substantiated God's justice and His reward and punishment. I have explained these signs at appropriate places of this *tafsīr*.

وَالسَّقْفِ الْمَرْفُوعِ^٦

After the earth, presented here is the evidence of the sky. The Qur'ān, in support of its claims, generally puts forth the signs of the sky together with those of the earth. Readers are advised to look up what I have written in Sūrah Dhāriyāt with reference to the following verses and **وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ** (and there is in the heavens your sustenance also and that too about which you are being threatened with, (51:22) and: **وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْحُبُوبِ** (and the striped winter clouds bear witness, (51:7)). It will become evident from this how much role the sky, winds and clouds had in the destruction of nations which incurred the wrath of God.

The sky is mentioned in the Qur'ān with different attributes keeping in view the context and occasion. Here it is called the lofty roof. The word “roof” (**سَقْف**) bears witness to the providence, graciousness and mercy of God: it is merely His grace that He has stretched this immense tent above our heads. The word “lofty” (**مَرْفُوع**) alludes to God's power, grandeur and greatness: what can be beyond the power of the being Who is capable of erecting such a roof. The various aspects through which both

these attributes of God (providence and power) bear witness to the Hereafter and to reward and punishment have been explained at several places in this *tafsīr*.

وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ (٦)⁷

The verb *سَجَرَ* means “to become brimful”. The expression *سَجَرَ الرَّجُلُ* means “he filled the stove with fuel”; the expression *سَجَرَ الْمَاءُ النَّهْرَ* means “water became brimful in the canal”.

After presenting the witness of the heavens and the earth, in this verse the biggest sign on the earth ie. the oceans are presented as witness. It should be kept in consideration that at other places in the Qur’ān also (eg. 55:10-24) after the signs of the heavens and the earth are alluded to the signs of the oceans are referred to. A reflection on these verses would reveal that man cannot count the signs of God’s singularity, power, providence and retribution found in the oceans. I have elucidated these signs at several instances in this *tafsīr*. These discussions need to be looked up. Some important aspects will inshallāh be discussed in the *tafsīr* of Sūrah Raḥmān. Here with respect to the central theme of the *sūrah* and the complement of oath, it should remain in consideration that the threatened torment after the oaths can historically be seen in the account of Noah’s nation as well as in the fate of the Pharaoh. Both these nations were inflicted by an oceanic calamity the details of which are found both in the Torah and in the Qur’ān.

إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ (٧). مَا لَهُ مِنْ دَافِعٍ (٨)⁸

These verses state the real claim after the oaths above, and it is this claim which forms the central theme of the *sūrah* as well. In the previous *sūrah*, this very claim was stated in slightly different words: *إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ* (indeed, the punishment you are being threatened with is true and indeed reward and punishment shall certainly take place). The only difference is that in this *sūrah* the aspect of punishment is more prominent. While explaining *إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَصَادِقٌ* in the previous *sūrah*, I had written that it refers to that punishment which the prophets of God warned of and that will be meted out both in this world and in the next. In this *sūrah*, the thing which was implicitly alluded to in the previous *sūrah* is elaborated upon. Elaborating upon what is stated in a concise manner first or explicitly mentioning something after its

7. And the overflowing seas bear witness.

8. That indeed, the punishment of your Lord is certain to come. No one shall be able to avert it.

implicit mention is a very common style of the Qur'ān. Examples can be seen in the previous *sūrahs*.

While elucidating the oaths mentioned in this *sūrah*, I have explained how they bear witness to the claim the verses under discussion mention. Repetition is not needed. It is while referring to this evidence that the Prophet (sws) is addressed and told that the punishment with which he is threatening the Quraysh and which they are making fun of is bound to come; no one will be able to ward it off: neither will their own power and community be able to avert it nor will their alleged deities be able to save them; neither will any one bail them out in this world nor in the next. The Quraysh are urged to take heed from the signs mentioned in the earlier verses and told that all of them are enough to substantiate the claim. Thus what was given to Moses (sws) on mount Tūr, what is written in the scriptures of the Torah, the signs with which this earth is replete, the multifarious manifestations of God's power to which the blue sky bears witness and the signs which can be observed in the oceans all are sufficient to substantiate this claim. No other sign is required. If these are not able to open their eyes, nothing else will for even if they see a portion of the sky falling on to them, they will dance with glee thinking this torment to be rain-laden clouds. So much so, this calamity will destroy them and they will still not profess faith.

يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَاءُ مَوْرًا (٩). وَتَسِيرُ الْجِبَالُ سَيْرًا (١٠). قَوْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ (١١). الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي خَوْضٍ يَلْعَبُونَ (١٢)⁹

This is a portrayal of the punishment: the sky which appears so stable, steady and strong in this world will start to reel and shake. The word *مَوْر* means “to move here and there uneasily and restlessly”. In other words, one portion of the sky will move in one direction and the other in another one. Similarly, the mountains which are well grounded in their places will be uprooted and move uncontrollably. The implication is that when on that day this will be the condition of the sky and the mountains, what will happen to man? On that day, what use will anyone's power or community, castles and trenches be for him! Here it should be kept in mind that whenever the Quraysh were informed of an upheaval which would take place on the Day of Judgement, they would mockingly ask the Prophet (sws) about what would happen to the mountains; would they too be shattered? At another place, the Qur'ān has answered this

9. Remember the Day when the sky will totter and reel, and the mountains will fly hither and thither. Therefore, woe, on that Day, be to the deniers, who, toying around, engage in pleasantries.

question by asking the Prophet (sws) to inform them that his Lord will crush these mountains to pieces.

The words *فَوَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ* mean that on that day death and perdition will be for those who are denying it today. The words *الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي خَوْضٍ يَلْعَبُونَ* mention a characteristic of these disbelievers which has brought the whole discourse in accordance with the situation. It thus becomes evident that it refers to the arrogant people among the Quraysh who were trying to tease and harass the Prophet (sws) and to render ineffective his warnings through their babble. Verse 29-46 ahead mentions the details.

The word *خَوْضٍ* means “to enter into something”. The expression *خاض الماء* means “he entered the water”. From this has originated the idiom *خاض القوم في الحديث*. In general, this idiom means to argue and chatter to support an evil and defy a truth. It has occurred the Qur’ān in this meaning at various instances. For example: (٦٩:٩) *وَحُضِّنُمْ كَالَّذِي خَاضُوا* (and like them, you have engaged in idle talk, (9:69)) and *فَذَرَهُمْ يَخُوضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا* (٨٣:٤٢) (so let them indulge in idle talk and babbling until they face that day of theirs which they are being threatened with, (42:83)).

In spite of being convinced of something, opposing it by trying to fabricate arguments against it is a form of playful attitude with one’s own intellect as well as that of one’s followers. For this reason, the Qur’ān has called this attitude *لَعِبٌ* (play). This attitude of making fun is dangerous in all circumstances; however, it becomes dangerous to the ultimate degree if eternal loss can be its result.

The details of this *خَوْضٍ* are coming up in the succeeding verses. They refer to the statements of the addressees which they utter against their conscience merely to undo the effect of the words of the Qur’ān and of the Prophet (sws) on the hearts of the people. For example, some of them would call him a soothsayer, some a poet, some a fabricator and some a bragger. Similarly, some others would claim that they too could present the discourse he was presenting. In short, to tease the Prophet (sws), each person would say anything that came to his mind. This opposing of the truth in this manner was mere entertainment to them. No one was bothered to think that this amusement could lead him and his people to eternal Hell.

*يَوْمَ يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى نَارٍ جَهَنَّمَ دَعَاً (١٣) هَذِهِ النَّارُ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ (١٤)*¹⁰

Mentioned in these verses are the calamities which such mischievous people will face on that day. The verb *دَعَّى* means to push some one with

10. The Day when they shall be shoved and driven towards Hell: This is the Fire you had been denying.

full force and hatred, and later the word **دَعَا** further emphasizes it. The implication is that today these people are busy in their pranks, but on that day they will be forcefully shoved towards Hell, and it will be said to them that this was the Hell they would make fun of and reject in the previous world.

أَفَسِحْرٌ هَذَا أَمْ أَنْتُمْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ (١٥)¹¹

They are addressed and told that when in the previous world the messenger of God would warn them of Hell, they would regard these warnings of the Qur'an to be a magic of words in order to make themselves and their masses indifferent to it. Now, they should speak up whether this is a magical spell woven by words or is it a reality. However, just as in the previous world they were blind to it, today also they are not being able to see it.

اَصْلَوْهَا فَاصْبِرُوا أَوْ لَا تَصْبِرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّمَا تُحْزَنُونَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (١٦)¹²

A divine declaration will bid them to enter Hell; there is no escape for them now. Whether they show patience or start shouting, both will be of no use to them: neither will patience save them nor shouts be able to provide relief to them. The words **إِنَّمَا تُحْزَنُونَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ** say that whatever they will be facing will be because of their own misdeeds. Had they been a target of an injustice and implored as a result, they should have expected their imploring to be answered; however, when their own misdeeds are shown to them, against what will they implore and from whom will they expect to receive an answer?

The words **إِنَّمَا تُحْزَنُونَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ** do not mean that all the deeds they did in the previous life will be shown to them in their exact form; it refers to their consequences. Whatever deed a person does in this world, whether good or bad, takes a special form before the Almighty with regard to its effects and consequences, and it is in this form that it will be shown to its doer. Though it will have a different form than the one it had in when it was done in the previous world but since it will be the harvest of the crop they had sown, the words express the fact that they are receiving the return for what they had done in the previous world.

11. Is this magic or are you blind?

12 Enter into it. Whether you bear it or not, it is alike for you. You are being rewarded with you were doing.

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَعِيمٍ ¹³(١٧)

In order to bring out the severity of punishment which will be inflicted on the deniers (مُكَذِّبِينَ), the reward given to the righteous (مُتَّقِينَ) is mentioned here. The style of contrast adopted here shows that by the righteous (مُتَّقِينَ) those people are referred to who instead of making fun of the warnings of the Prophet (sws) carefully listened to them, reflected on them and held them very dear. Such righteous indeed will dwell in gardens and in bliss.

فَاكِهِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ وَوَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ ¹⁴(١٨)

Coming up are the details of how the righteous will enjoy the gardens and bliss they will be blessed with. The vagueness found in بِمَا آتَاهُمْ bears witness to enhanced majesty: no one can imagine today what their Lord will grant them. Its extent can only be imagined when it will actually be received and only by those who are its recipients.

In my opinion the words وَوَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ are conjugated with بِمَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ. They will enjoy the overwhelming favours of their Lord and will be particularly happy that God by His grace saved them from the torment of Hell. The word فَاكِهِينَ itself encompasses the meaning of joy and acknowledging favour; hence a separate word is not required for this meaning. It is evident from this verse that on the Day of Judgement the righteous will regard God's greatest favour to be saved from the Hell these rejecters are making fun of today. Every inch of their being will be grateful for this. Further ahead in this *sūrah*, this subject is discussed thus: قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ فَمَنْ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَانَا عَذَابَ السَّمُومِ (٢٦-٢٧) (they will say: "before this, we remained fearful about our families so the Almighty has been gracious to us and has delivered us from the agony of the punishment of Hell, (26-27)).

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ¹⁵(١٩)

These people will be delivered glad tidings from their Lord that as a reward for their deeds, they can eat and drink to their heart's content. Neither will this harm them in any way nor will these favours decrease in the least, nor will they have to bear any grief for them.

The word هَنِيئًا is an adjective of the order of فَعِيل. It means something

13. Indeed, the righteous shall be in gardens and bliss.

14. Enjoying what their Lord would have granted them and enjoying the fact that their Lord has preserved them from the torment of Hell-fire.

15. Eat and drink with relish as reward for the deeds you have done.

which is very suitable. Here, as an adjective, it qualifies a suppressed verbal noun. The actual sentence would be: *كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا أَكْلًا وَ شَرِبًا هَنِيئًا*. Some people regard it to be an accusative of state (حال). However, this view is against grammatical rules.

مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَى سُرُرٍ مَصْفُوفَةٍ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينٍ (٢٠)¹⁶

The word مُتَّكِئِينَ is actually an explanation of فَاكِهِينَ mentioned in verse eighteen. Verse nineteen is a parenthetical sentence. The implied meaning is that the righteous will be enjoying the favours of their Lord while sitting on thrones arranged in consecutive rows. Being arranged thus is a depiction of perfect decoration of their seats. Implied also is the fact that they will be mutually very dear to and frank with one another. For this reason, they will sit facing each other. At other instances, the word متقبلين is used to convey this meaning.

A person's enjoyment is incomplete without his wife and children. For this reason, the Almighty will bless the believers with this favour. The words used for this give us only a broad idea of these favours. Their reality and form are only known to God. It will become evident to us only in the Hereafter.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُمْ مِنْ عَمَلِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ (٢١)¹⁷

Among the many things which the Almighty will grant the believers in Paradise to perfect these favours is the news that those among their children who followed their parents in faith will be united with them there even though they might not be entitled to this with respect to their faith and deeds. For this union, the principle stated in this verse is: *وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُمْ مِنْ عَمَلِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ*. Children having a lower level of faith will be upgraded to the status of the parents without reducing the latter's status. In other words, the parents will remain on the status to which they were entitled because of their faith and deeds; the Almighty out of His grace will raise the status of their children.

The word *إِيمَانٍ* in *وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ* shows that this concession is reserved only for those children who followed their parents in professing

16. They will be reclining on thrones arranged in rows and We would have wed them with large eyed houris.

17. And those who had accepted faith, and their children had followed them in their faith, We shall unite their children with them and not diminish the reward of their deeds.

faith. If they are devoid of faith, they will not be entitled to this concession even though they may vehemently claim to have followed the parents.

Since the word إِيْمَان (faith) occurs as an undefined noun, it is evident that it has levels. If children occupy a level in Paradise reserved for the very lowest in faith, even then they will be entitled to this concession.

The words كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ express God's principle of salvation: each person will be judged on his deeds. It is only his deeds that will salvage or destroy him. A person devoid of faith and good deeds will not enter Paradise by merely having an outward relationship with virtue. The Almighty will bless only those who are worthy of being blessed on the basis of their faith and deeds. Concealed in these words is a warning to both the Jews and the Idolaters of Arabia. They totally disfigured the religion of Abraham (sws) and Ishmael (sws) but still dreamt of attaining a high status in Paradise merely due to being their descendents.

Here a question may arise in someone's mind: If the real standard on the basis of which a person shall be saved in the Hereafter relates to his deeds, then how can children be elevated to a higher status belonging to their parents? The answer to this question is that this matter relates to God's graciousness which He has reserved for the faithful. It does not negate the principle mentioned in the verse كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ. Indeed a person will not be salvaged in the Hereafter without faith and good deeds; however, this does not necessitate that God will not elevate the faithful. Both are separate issues and there is no contradiction between them.

The reverse can also be deduced from this verse: parents having faith and occupying a lower status in Paradise will be elevated to the status of their children entitled to a higher status to complete their joy even though the parents may not be entitled to this higher status on the basis of the extent of their faith and deeds. The reason for this deduction is that the affection found between parents and children is the same found between children and parents.

Here the occasion and context of the glad tidings also need consideration. If a person has true faith, the greatest worry which occupies his mind regarding his children is that the Almighty save them from the horrors of the Hereafter and protect them from the calamity of Hell. The desire that children attain worldly success if it arises in their minds is secondary in nature. Thus in the prayers made by the Prophets and the righteous for their children, success in the Hereafter is mentioned in preference and in fact regarded as the real thing. Same was the case with people who had embraced faith in the times of the Prophet (sws). When their hearts were lit up with the radiance of faith, their greatest

concern about their children was not regarding their worldly future but regarding their future in the Hereafter. This concern is evident from verse twenty six of this very *sūrah*: *إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ* (before this, we remained fearful about our families). I will *inshallāh* explain in this verse that the concern referred to in the verse relates to the fact that a goat of the herd they were made a shepherd of by the Almighty should not be devoured by a wolf and in fact just as the Almighty took them out from the darkness of the age of ignorance and guided them onto the straight path, on a similar basis, their children are also blessed with faith so that they do not face the horrors of Hell. It is to assure these faithful people of His that the Almighty gave glad tidings that though the principle that no one will be salvaged on the Day of Judgement without faith and righteous deeds is strict, yet the Almighty will be further gracious to them: If their children followed them and even if they had a lower status with regard to their faith, the Almighty will reunite their children with them and for this union, He will not reduce their status; on the contrary, He will elevate the status of their children.

This verse guides us to fact that each person should try to guide his close ones to the path of faith as much as possible. Without faith, no will succeed in the Hereafter even though he may be the progeny of a prophet or messenger of God. However, if the offspring of someone followed the path of faith and even if this faith was of the lowest level, they will be able to join their parents who occupied a higher status in Paradise due to their faith.

وَأَمْدَدْنَاهُمْ بِفَاكِهَةٍ وَلَحْمٍ مِّمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ (٢٢)¹⁸

The verse implies that just as the Almighty will join together their children with them in Paradise, similarly, He will provide even more of their cherished fruits and meat to them. The word *أَمْدَدْنَا* is pointing to the fact that with the increase in number, their provisions and sustenance will also increase.

The two words *فَاكِهَةٍ* and *لَحْمٍ* combine in them all the favours related to edibles whether they relate to basic nourishment or to added nourishment.

يَتَنَزَّعُونَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا لَا لَغْوٌ فِيهَا وَلَا تَأْتِيمٌ (٢٣)¹⁹

Mentioned in this verse are the bliss and delight which the People of

18. Each individual shall be in pledge for his deeds.

19. And We shall continue to provide them the fruits and meat they like. Such cups shall pass between them which will be free from sin and idle talk.

Paradise will enjoy: cups of wine will be exchanged between them. The expression *تَعَاظَوْهَا فِيهَا تَتَارَعُوا* means *تَعَاظَوْهَا* (they will mutually extend cups of wine towards one another). Snatching and grabbing is not an essential part of this word's meaning. The word *كَاسٌ* is spoken both for a utensil and what a utensil holds in itself; in other words, it comes for both wine and cups of wine.

The words *لَا لَغْوٌ فِيهَا وَلَا تَأْثِيمٌ* imply that this wine will be free of the evil effects which are part and parcel of the wine of this world. After consuming it, a person will neither indulge in useless babble nor blame another person of some sin. The word *أَثَمُهُ تَأْثِيمًا* would mean "he blamed him of a sin". Among the evils of the wines of this world is that after being inebriated with it, a person starts insulting and blaming his adversaries and their daughters and daughters-in-law. In the age of *jāhiliyyah*, a number of family feuds would arise as a result of this. At another instance, the Qur'an has referred to this evil by saying that through it Satan incites animosity and hatred among people. On the other hand, the wine of Paradise will spread the fragrance of love and affection. Thus the words in Sūrah Wāqī'ah are: *لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْثِيمًا* (there they shall hear no idle talk, no sinful speech. Only greetings and congratulations everywhere, (56:25-26)).

وَيَظُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ غِلْمَانٌ لَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لُؤْلُؤٌ مَكْنُونٌ (٢٤)²⁰

Young boys will be present to serve them and to carry out their wishes all the time. Their purity and beauty will make them appear like pearls which were preserved in shells and have come out to serve them. The people of Arabia use the simile *لُؤْلُؤٌ مَكْنُونٌ* to depict the ultimate elegance and finesse of something. The style of the Qur'an shows that the Almighty will create these young boys for this purpose. Some people hold a different view; however, there is no argument to support their view. Hence, there is no need to criticize it.

وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ (٢٥)²¹

After being united in Paradise, just as the passengers of a long and arduous journey inquire after one another, in a similar manner, the dwellers of Paradise will anxiously turn to each other and inquire what happened. They will ask each other how the journey was, how many gruelling inclines they had to climb, how they reached their destination

20. And there shall wait upon them young boys like pearls preserved.

21. They will turn towards one another asking about each other.

and how they found their family united with them.

قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ (٢٦)²²

Those who answer will say that before this, in the previous world, they remained fearful for their family and were concerned for their fate in the same manner they were concerned for their own fate. They will express that they were never overcome with pride at the status of their family and tribe and did not think that whatever they were blessed with in that world was their right by birth by virtue of belonging to a specific tribe, and that no one could snatch it away from them. They will go on to say that they always kept the Hereafter in consideration and continued to pray to the Almighty that He raise them in the Hereafter as the leaders of the righteous and not as leaders of the defiant. They will further say that they always impressed upon their children to adhere to the prayer, pay *zakāh* and remain fearful of God and to live and die while practicing the true religion.

فَمَنْ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَّانَا عَذَابَ السَّمُومِ (٢٧)²³

These words are a continuation of their speech: they will affirm that as a reward for remaining fearful and anxious, the Almighty looked upon them with favour and united their children with them in Paradise and protected them from the scorching winds of Hell. The word السَّمُومِ refers to “hot wind and the flame of fire”. This style of speech is an ultimate expression of God’s favours and blessings. The implied meaning is that God will even keep them away from hot winds not to speak of Hell.

إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلُ نَدْعُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَرُّ الرَّحِيمُ (٢٨)²⁴

This verse is connected to verse 26 earlier: قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ. The implied meaning being that these people on the one hand remained among their families while remaining fearful for them and on the other beseeched God alone whether in the state of fear or hope or expectancy. Except Him, they neither invoked anyone nor associated partners with Him. The contents of verse 28 should have been placed after verse 26 above; however, to immediately express the favours and blessings of

22. Saying: Before this, we remained fearful about our families.

23. So the Almighty has been gracious to us and has delivered us from the agony of the punishment of Hell.

24. We used to invoke only Him before. Indeed, He is the keeper of His promises, Ever-Merciful.

God, verse 27 was juxtaposed in between. The eloquence in deferring the words of verse 28 is that the real factor for the success of a person in the Hereafter is the belief of *tawhīd*. A person who protected it will be worthy of God's favours and a person who distorted will doom himself. The dwellers of Paradise will express the fact that they were firmly grounded in their belief and for this reason, the Almighty looked upon them with favour.

The words **إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَرُّ الرَّحِيمُ** will be spoken by them to express their utter gratefulness at being blessed with such favours: the Almighty is true to His promises and very merciful for not only has He fulfilled all the promises He made to His people, He has blessed them with even more favours. I have already presented my research on the word **بَرٌّ** at a relevant place of this *tafsīr*. When this word is used as an adjective for the Almighty, it means that He will fulfil all the promises He made to His creatures. Veracity and loyalty form the spirit of this word. The word **رَّحِيمٌ** qualifies the fact that He not only fulfils promises, He forgives the mistakes of people and blesses them with further favours.

Section II: (Verses 29-49)

In the succeeding verses, the Prophet (sws) is encouraged: He is told that he should keep reminding people through the Qur'ān while disregarding their nonsensical talk; people who are adamant in denying him are only inviting their own doom. In this regard, in order to silence the objections of the Prophet's adversaries, answers are also given to which the word **خَوْضٌ** has referred to in the previous section. These babbles are called an intrigue by the Qur'ān and the Prophet (sws) assured that they will not be able to harm in any way the call to the true faith; in fact, this stratagem will go against them. At the end, the Prophet (sws) is assured that the greatest of miracles will not be able to convince them. They will only be convinced on the Day of Judgement. At that time, their helplessness will become evident to them from every aspect. So the Prophet (sws) should wait for the decision of His Lord with patience and to acquire this patience as much as he can he should glorify Him as much as possible.

In the light of this background, readers may now proceed to read these verses.

Text and Translation

فَذَكِّرْ مَا أَنْتَ بِنِعْمَتِ رَبِّكَ بِكَاهِنٍ وَلَا مَجْنُونٍ (٢٩) أَمْ يَقُولُونَ شَاعِرٌ نَتَرَبَّصُ بِهِ

رَبِّ الْمُنُونِ (٣٠) قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَإِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُرَبِّصِينَ (٣١) أَمْ تَأْمُرُهُمْ أَخْلَامُهُمْ
 بِهَذَا أَمْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاعُونَ (٣٢) أَمْ يَقُولُونَ تَقَوَّلَهُ بَلْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (٣٣) فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِّثْلِهِ
 إِن كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ (٣٤) أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ (٣٥) أَمْ خَلَقُوا
 السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَلْ لَا يُوقِنُونَ (٣٦) أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَبِّكَ أَمْ هُمُ الْمُصِيطِرُونَ
 (٣٧) أَمْ لَهُمْ سُلَّمٌ يَسْتَمِعُونَ فِيهِ فَلْيَأْتِ مُسْتَمِعُهُمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ (٣٨) أَمْ لَهُ الْبَنَاتُ
 وَلَكُمْ الْبَنُونَ (٣٩) أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِنْ مَّغْرَمٍ مُتَقَلِّوْنَ (٤٠) أَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ
 يَكْتُمُونَ (٤١) أَمْ يُرِيدُونَ كَيْدًا فَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَكِيدُونَ (٤٢) أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ
 سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ (٤٣) وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كِسْفًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ سَاقِطًا يَقُولُوا سَحَابٌ
 مَرْكُومٌ (٤٤) فَذَرُهُمْ حَتَّى يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي فِيهِ يُصْعَقُونَ (٤٥) يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ
 كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ (٤٦) وَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عَذَابًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ
 لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (٤٧) وَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ (٤٨)
 وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَإِدْبَارَ النُّجُومِ (٤٩)

Therefore, keep reminding. By the grace of your Lord you are no soothsayer or one possessed. Do they say that he is a poet for whom we await an adverse turn of fortune? Tell them: "Wait and I shall also wait with you." Does their intellect prompt them to say this or are they a people rebellious? Do they say that he himself has concocted the Qur'ān? In fact, they do not want to accept faith. Then let them produce a scripture like it, if they are truthful. (29-34)

Have they been created without any creator or are they their own creators? Have they created the heavens and the earth? In fact they do not have conviction. (35-36)

Do they alone have the treasures of your Lord or are in charge of them? Do they have a ladder climbing which they overhear the secrets of the heavens? If this is so, then let their listener bring a clear proof. Is it that He has daughters whilst you have sons? (37-39)

Do you ask a reward from them that they are burdened with its penalty? Do they have knowledge of the Unseen; thus they write it down themselves? Do they intend to contrive a plot? Then they should remember that those who have disbelieved shall themselves be trapped in it. Do they have a god besides Allah? Exalted is Allah above what they associate with Him. (40-43)

And even if they see a fragment of the heavens falling down they

would say: "A heap of clouds." So leave them alone till they encounter their Day when they shall stand taken aback. The Day when their guiles will be of no avail to them, nor will they be helped. (44-46)

And for these wrongdoers, there is another punishment besides this but most of them know it not. And wait patiently for your Lord's decree. Indeed, you are before Our eyes. And glorify your Lord and praise Him when you rise and glorify Him in the night also and at the declining of the stars too. (47-49)

Explanation

فَذَكِّرْ فَمَا أَنْتَ بِنِعْمَتِ رَبِّكَ بِكَاهِنٍ وَلَا مَجْنُونٍ (٢٩)²⁵

The word ف shows that the succeeding verse is a corollary of what has been mentioned earlier. The Qur'ānic warning about the punishment is substantiated in the previous verses. After that, the Prophet (sws) is addressed to assure him that he should continue to do whatever he is doing to remind them. He should not care about the allegations and reproaches of the enemy. If they call him a soothsayer or a mad man, then let them utter such nonsense. With the grace of His Lord, he is neither a soothsayer nor a man possessed.

The words بِنِعْمَتِ رَبِّكَ actually provide an argument: it is not that the blessings and favours of God he enjoys are something which cannot be seen by others. What relationship do the words of wisdom and cognizance he utters on behalf of God have with the nonsensical utterances of the soothsayers? Do the soothsayers possess even a tiny speck of the character he has? He is a perfect embodiment of truth and righteousness whereas the soothsayers are liars and cheats. He receives from the Holy Spirit while the soothsayers eavesdrop to hear inspirations from the devils and in this too they make a false display. Similarly, those who call him an insane person are insane themselves. Who else can be more sane, vigilant and wise than him?

This allegation on the Prophet (sws) by his adversaries was totally against the calls of their conscience; for this reason, there was no need to present many arguments for its refutation. Its unfounded nature was absolutely evident on those who were making these allegations. They would make up such things only to fool their masses. I have explained all the essential aspects of this behaviour in the *tafsīr* of Sūrah Shu'arā'. Readers may look it up.

25. Therefore, keep reminding. By the grace of your Lord you are no soothsayer or one possessed.

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ شَاعِرٌ تَتَرَبَّصُ بِهِ رَيْبَ الْمُنُونِ (٣٠) قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَإِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِّنَ الْمُتَرَبِّصِينَ (٣١)²⁶

This is the answer to their second allegation: they regard the Prophet (sws) to be a poet and hope that just as many poets presented their compositions and then became part of the past, the vicissitudes of time will one day destroy him too; if such people are waiting for this to happen, then the Prophet (sws) should tell them that they can keep on waiting and that he will wait too for the warnings he is sounding them to materialize or see whether what they are dreaming of comes true.

If the adversaries of the Prophet (sws) called him a poet, then, as I have explained at many places in this *tafsīr*, the reason for this was not that they in fact regarded him to be a poet; they would do this to reduce the effect caused by the potent and eloquent style of the Qur'ān on the hearts of people as a result of which they were being overawed and were being led to believe in its divinity. These people wanted to assure the masses that the force found in the Qur'ān was the same as the one found in the compositions of their poets; hence, they should not consider it to be divine and live in the fear of a promised doom nor should they lose hope in their ancestral religion; just as their own poets became very famous in their times but their fame as well as their poetry was lost to posterity, similarly, for some time this person's (the Prophet's) eloquence and articulacy will cause a stir; but soon this rise will have a fall.

The words قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَإِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِّنَ الْمُتَرَبِّصِينَ say that if these people are waiting for it, then the Prophet (sws) should tell them to wait as well and that he too is waiting to see whether their foolish desire is fulfilled or what the Almighty is threatening them with materializes.

The word الْمُنُونِ means الدَّهْرُ (time). There is an idiom دَارَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمُنُونِ which means "he became prey to the misfortunes of time". The expression رَيْبَ الْمُنُونِ means the "mishaps of time".

The Qur'ān has refuted this allegation of the adversaries in detail in Sūrah Shu'arā'. In that *sūrah*, the Qur'ān has presented a certain criteria on the basis of which every sensible person can decide whether the Qur'ān and its presenter can be compared with poetry and poets. I have tried to elaborate upon all of its aspects there.

أَمْ تَأْمُرُهُمْ أَحْلَامُهُمْ بِهَذَا أَمْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ (٣٢)²⁷

There are only two options: either their intellect is guiding them not to regard the Prophet (sws) as God-sent and to regard him as a soothsayer,

26. Do they say: that he is a poet for whom we await an adverse turn of fortune? Tell them: "Wait and I shall also wait with you."

27. Does their intellect prompt them to say this or are they a people rebellious?

poet or mad person or that these people because of their haughtiness are not willing to accept what he is calling them to and thus are finding excuses for this rejection. The implication is that the first of these options is very unlikely. How can a sensible person regard the Prophet (sws) who is an embodiment of veracity, truthfulness, sensibility and seriousness and who is wise, dedicated to his cause, a true believer and submitter to God to be a mad person or a poet? If a person is audacious enough to make such claims, it only means that he is devoid of any sense. In other words, it is their haughtiness which is inducing them to say such things; their intellect has no role in it.

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ تَقَوَّلَهُ بَلْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (۳۳) فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِّثْلِهِ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ (۳۴)²⁸

Mentioned here is another of their allegations and its answer: they say that the Prophet (sws) has fabricated the Qur'ān and to falsely claim the status of prophethood, he says that it has been revealed by the Almighty through His angel. The verb تَقَوَّلَ means to falsely accuse someone. At other places, the expression is used to convey this meaning is بَلْ افْتَرَاهُ. In other words, their opinion is that though the Prophet (sws) has fabricated this Book yet to deceive the masses it is claimed that it is from God.

The words بَلْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ express the reality: this allegation of theirs is also against the call of their conscience. They are fully certain that the Prophet (sws) has not authored this book; they know full well that such a discourse can neither be produced by him nor by anyone else; however, they do not want to profess faith in it; for this reason in order to hide their crime they are making such lame excuses. In my opinion, the verb here expresses intention. Several examples of such usage have been indicated earlier on in this *tafsīr*.

The words فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِّثْلِهِ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ challenge them in response to their allegation: if they really think that this Book has been produced by the Prophet (sws), then they should produce such a discourse from the poets and orators of the past or even sit together themselves and produce something in response.

It should be kept in consideration that the Qur'ān has given this answer in response to the Quraysh and it was totally befitting for this occasion; however, this challenge stands even today. The rejecters of the Qur'ān have neither been able to produce something like it from their literary and religious treasures of the past nor have they produced something similar themselves nor did anything come to the forefront in later history

28. Do they say that he himself has concocted the Qur'ān? In fact, they do not want to accept faith. Then let them produce a scripture like it, if they are truthful.

which can be called an answer to this challenge. For non-Arabian nations, this challenge is not direct; however, they too can test their mettle and see whether they can bring forth something of this calibre or not. It must also be kept in consideration that this challenge of the Qur'ān is not just from one aspect; it is an over all challenge as a scripture of guidance. It is possible that a nation claims that there is no poet or orator of the calibre of their own poets or orators; however, in the first place, this claim is debatable because another nation can make this claim in favour of its literati. However, even if this claim is accepted it can, at best, be an acknowledgement of its superiority in one skill which no one can present as an evidence for him being a prophet nor can anyone accept him as a prophet or a messenger on this basis.

أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمْ الْخَالِقُونَ (٣٥) أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَلْ لَا يُوقِنُونَ (٣٦)²⁹

After answering the allegations and objections of the disbelievers, a few questions are raised: if they do not believe in the Hereafter or in divine punishment, they should speak up and say whether they have been created without a creator or whether they are their own creators. They should, moreover, tell whether they have created the heavens and the earth?

It should be kept in consideration that the Idolaters of Arabia regarded God to be their creator as well as that of the heavens and the earth. By posing this question to them, the Qur'ān has in fact asked them that if they regard God Almighty to be their own creator as well as that of the heavens and the earth, then why do they consider His punishment and His Day of reward and punishment to be improbable? Do they think that after creating them once, the Almighty is not capable of creating them again? If this is what they think, then this is outright foolishness. If someone can create them the first time, he is all the more capable of creating them again.

Similarly, they should also think that when they are not their own creators and in fact someone else has created them who has also arranged for their livelihood and sustenance, then is it possible that He let them go scot-free and never ask them one day whether they fulfilled the objective for which He created them?

On these very grounds, they should also reflect on the fact that they have neither created the heavens below which they live nor the earth above which they live – the heavens and the earth and the blessings

29. Have they been created without any creator or are they their own creators. Have they created the heavens and the earth. In fact they do not have conviction.

found in them and between them they benefit from. So, do they not owe any obligation to Him who has created them and will not they be held accountable for their attitude in the house He has built for them?

Similarly, they should also reflect on the fact that when neither the earth has been created by them nor have the heavens, then on what backing have they become fearless of the Creator of the heavens and the earth? He can shake and jolt the earth whenever He wants to and they will be totally ravaged. Also, whenever He wants, He can unleash on them tempestuous winds, hailstorms and hurl stones on them and totally destroy them in the blink of an eye.

The word *بَلَّ لَا يُوقِنُونَ* unveil the real reason behind their evasion and rejection: they do accept and acknowledge all the principal factors which necessitate the advent of the Hereafter and the reward and punishment that will take place on that day and do not dare to negate any of these; however, at the same time, they do not believe that they are worthy of divine punishment and that if they do not mend their ways, they will, one day be afflicted by it. Here the object of the verb *يُوقِنُونَ* which could be *بالعذاب* or *بالآخرة* is suppressed because of clear contextual indications.

I have been explaining at various places in this *tafsīr* that the Quraysh were not absolute rejecters of the Hereafter; they regarded it to be improbable. They believed that the Day of Judgment and the reward and punishment which would take place on that Day was a mere folk tale, and secondly, if there was some truth in it, then it was so far off that they did not need to worry about it. Thirdly, if ever it came, the intercession of their deities would protect them from God's punishment. Similarly, they also did not believe in the worldly punishment which the Qur'ān was warning them of if they rejected the truth. They regarded their existing status of affluence to be an argument in support of the veracity of their beliefs and deeds. They reckoned that if they really deserved punishment as per the opinion of the Prophet (sws) and his companions, why were they be more affluent and resourceful in this world than the Prophet (sws) and his companions? The situation should have been totally the opposite.

If one reflects on this mental state of theirs, one can conclude that this primarily is a state of disbelief. There was no option for them to run away from the reality. All premises which necessitated it were known and substantiated and the Qur'ān had also recounted these to them. However, since accepting them was against their desire, they would try to look ignorant. They were not convinced fully that such an incident would take place one day.

Further reflection will also reveal the fact that just as the Quraysh were

afflicted with this malady of disbelief, in a similar manner, many Muslims today are afflicted with it. These Muslims do not reject the Hereafter and its reward and punishment; however, their lives bear witness to the fact that they do not have conviction in these things. If this lack of conviction on their part is analyzed, one can see that they too have been misled by similar notions as the Idolaters of Arabia were.

أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَبِّكَ أَمْ هُمُ الْمُصَيِّطُونَ (٣٧)³⁰

A question similar to the one posed in the previous two verses is posed here: If they are not the Creators of the heavens and the earth, are they the owners of the treasures of the Prophet's Lord or are they wholly solely in charge of them so that they need not worry about God's grasp? The implication is that just as they cannot claim to be the Creators of the heavens and the earth, they also cannot claim that the Almighty has given His treasures of sustenance and favours in their custody or has deputed them on their distribution so that they can withhold them from whomever they want to. Moreover, why do they think in their conceit that they cannot be seized by God or that they will not be deprived of the luxuries they are enjoying in this world or in the Hereafter? If ever it comes, who can deprive them of these luxuries? The Qur'ān at various places has referred to this vanity of the Quraysh and other affluent people of previous nations in that they regarded their affluence to be their birthright and for this reason they showed indifference to the warnings of the Prophet (sws). It is this devilish notion of theirs which is refuted: when they are neither the owners of God's treasures nor are deputed on their distribution, why are they in this craze? Whenever God wants, He can strip them of this affluence in the blink of an eye and grant it to those whom they do not regard to be its worthy recipients.

This thing has been asserted in the Qur'ān by addressing the arrogant among the Quraysh who would object that if God was to send a human being as His messenger, then He would have selected some rich person of Makkah or Tā'if and not a poor and destitute person like Muḥammad (sws). They would similarly contend that had the religion he was calling them to been of divine origin, the Almighty would have selected them to be its bearers and not the poverty-stricken, the penniless and the slaves who did not possess worldly favours or respect. This verse also effectively refutes this haughtiness of these arrogant people.

30. Do they alone have the treasures of your Lord or are in charge of them?

أَمْ لَهُمْ سُلَّمٌ يَسْتَمِعُونَ فِيهِ فَلَيَأْتِي مُسْتَمِعُهُمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ (٣٨)³¹

The implied meaning of this verse is: what is the basis of their thinking that they will continue to enjoy the luxuries of life in this world and if ever the Hereafter comes, they will remain superior to others? Do they have a ladder which they can climb and on it listen to God's decisions in their favour? Is some other Book revealed to them in which all their desires and wishes are written? Has the Almighty given them His written acquittal so that they can indulge in whatever mischief they want to and He will neither hold them accountable in this world nor in the Hereafter? If such a piece of information has been divulged to them by a divine informer, they should present clear evidence in support of it.

Here what is stated has been stated rather concisely. Sūrah Qalam comprehensively deals with this subject. I have interpreted this verse in the light of Sūrah Qalam. Therefore, cited below are its relevant verses to dispel the notion that while interpreting this verse I have gone to needless lengths:

أَمْ لَكُمْ كِتَابٌ فِيهِ تَدْرُسُونَ إِنَّ لَكُمْ فِيهِ لَمَا يَتَخَيَّرُونَ أَمْ لَكُمْ أَيْمَانٌ عَلَيْنَا بَالِغَةَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ لَكُمْ لَمَا تَحْكُمُونَ سَلُّهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ بِذَلِكَ زَعِيمٌ (٦٨: ٣٧-٤٠)

Have you a scripture in which you read that you will have whatever you desire? Or have you oaths with Us binding till the Day of Judgement that you will have what you yourselves ordain? Ask if any of them will take responsibility of this? (68:37-40)

In the verse under discussion, as per linguistic principles, there are a few instances of ellipses. If they are unveiled the whole discourse would be something to the effect: أَمْ لَهُمْ سُلَّمٌ مَنصُوبٌ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ يَسْمَعُونَ صَاعِدِينَ فِيهِ (do they have a ladder which is resting against the sky climbing which they can eavesdrop). It is evident from this that man, for his guidance, needs divine revelation. Now either every person should provide evidence that he has the means to receive divine revelation. And if every person cannot make this claim and obviously he cannot, then it is incumbent upon him to trust the guidance of those who have these means.

أَمْ لَهُ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَكُمْ الْبَنُونَ (٣٩)³²

The implication of this verse is that if none of the options mentioned

31. Do they have a ladder climbing which they overhear the secrets of heaven? If this is so then let their listener bring a clear proof.

32. Is it that He has daughters whilst you have sons?

above is the case, then is their conceit based on their intercessors in that they are their protectors not only in this world but also in the Hereafter? If this is the case, then to bring to light the baselessness of their claim only this much is enough that they contend daughters for God whereas they themselves like sons and hate daughters. In other words, if they were not led to reflect on the fact that no one can be God's associate or partner, then at least in keeping with an obvious requirement of human nature they should not have liked a thing for God which they disliked for themselves. However, they were guilty of compound foolishness: in the first place, they imputed partners to God without having any grounds to do so, and in the second place whatever they associated with God they did not like to be associated to them.

It needs to be kept in mind that to the Idolaters of Arabia, the highest status was occupied by three deities whom they thought to be beloved daughters of God and who could convince Him to do whatever they wanted. In Sūrah Najm, the forthcoming *sūrah*, they are mentioned in detail in the following words:

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ وَمَنَاةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَىٰ أَلَكُمُ الذَّكْرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَىٰ تِلْكَ إِذَا قِسْمَةٌ
ضِيزَىٰ إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَّا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ
يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمُ الْهُدَىٰ (٥٣: ١٩-٢٣)

Have you ever pondered over Lāt and ‘Uzzā and the third Manāt which is next in rank below them? For your own selves you like sons and for Him daughters! This indeed is a division unjust! They are but names which you and your fathers have invented in whose favour the Almighty has revealed no argument. They follow vain conjectures and the whims of their own souls, even though there has already come to them a manifest guidance from their Lord. (53: 19-23)

أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِنْ مَّعْرَمٍ مُثْقَلُونَ (٤٠)³³

Wonder is expressed here at their abhorrence for the truth: why do not they listen to the Prophet? After all, he is not asking them for payment to listen to him and they are not being burdened by the amount. He is distributing the favours of His Lord free of cost. So why is it that they are not even ready to listen to him?

It needs to be kept in consideration that knowledge instead of ignorance is after all a cherished thing. No upright person tolerates and

33. Do you ask a reward from them that they are burdened with its penalty?

nor should tolerate the attitude that when something of which he has no knowledge is presented to him he is unwilling to listen to it. A person who tolerates such things can be compared to a blind person who is stumbling about but when someone tries to show him the way he shakes off his hand. The Arabs were *ummi* (not conversant with the *sharī'ah*). As a result, they should have been seekers of God's guidance particularly when, from the time of Ishmael (sws), they had been hearing the tradition that God would raise a prophet among them who would bring people into light from darkness and from whom all nations of the world would receive guidance. It was incumbent upon them that when a person from within them called them to the way of God, they paid heed to him and seriously reflected on what he said. However, contrary to this expectation, they adopted the opposite attitude. It is on this state of affairs that the Qur'an has expressed amazement.

أَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُونَ (٤١)³⁴

They were very abhorrent of the Prophet (sws) and the guidance he had presented to them; so, did they have any means of knowing the matters of the unseen from which they were able to find out all necessary information and write it down? Obviously, they had no such means. In this situation, it was only befitting that they lunge forward to grab the guidance he was providing them because he was guiding them, through divine revelation, to God's directives and to what He would like human beings to do to please Him. However, they are showing their disgust and had concocted themselves a *sharī'ah*: it was totally based on their desires and fancies but they regarded it be the religion revealed to them by God. While referring to such fancies of theirs, the following verse of Sūrah Najm says: (٣٥: ٥٣) أَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ فَهُوَ يَرَى (has he the knowledge of the Unseen; thus he is seeing it, (53:35)). The verse under discussion alludes to people who were devoid of faith and virtuous deeds but claimed that since they were the progeny of nobles, they would be blessed with a high status in Paradise. This vanity made them make fun of the Prophet's warnings and they would remark that he was threatening them with torment whereas very soon the tide of time would destroy him and that they were waiting for this time.

34. Do they have knowledge of the Unseen; thus they write it down themselves?

أَمْ يُرِيدُونَ كَيْدًا فَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمْ الْمَكِيدُونَ (٤٢)³⁵

The reality is unfolded here in the form of a question: all their lame excuses and arguments were only a veil. The fact of the matter is that they were foreseeing an end to their leadership with the expansion of the Prophet's message. To save it, they would concoct things against their conscience and spread them so that the masses were not influenced by the message and break away from them. The verse asks if they want to contrive a plot; if this is so, then those who disbelieve should remember that that they themselves will be caught in their own plot.

The implication is that those have evaded the truth and led people away from it contrive schemes against their conscience, they cause no harm to those who are calling them to the truth; they only ruin their own selves. The path to salvation and success is only the one which the Almighty has revealed through his prophets and messengers. If a person adopts a different path then, in order to prove his own misguidance to be guidance, all the arguments he fashions in support of his flawed way and all the allegations he invents against those who are calling to the true path will still not be able to save him. When he encounters his fate, it will become evident to him that he reached this destination because of his own schemes and contrivances.

أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ (٤٣)³⁶

The implied meaning of this verse is that in the end all have to come to God's presence. So who will save them from the consequences of the schemes they are contriving against Him? Do they think that they have some other gods besides God who will help them? If this is so, then they should remember that God Almighty is above and beyond the partners they are ascribing to Him.

The argument *سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ* which the words carry has been explained at a relevant place in this *tafsīr*: no attribute can be ascribed to God which is against His established and acknowledged attributes. The Almighty has mentioned His own attributes. The Idolaters of Arabia too believed in them yet at the same time they indulged in certain polytheistic practices in order to make their whims and innovations a part of religion. These practices actually refute the basic attributes of God. It is to this reality that the above quoted words of the verse point:

35. Do they intend to make a move? Then they should remember that those who have disbelieved shall themselves be trapped in it.

36. Do they have a god besides Allah? Exalted is Allah above what they associate with Him.

God is above all the polytheistic ascriptions they make to Him. Such baseless things have no relation to His exalted and superior being.

وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كِسْفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ سَاقِطًا يَقُولُوا سَحَابٌ مَّرْكُومٌ (٤٤)³⁷

An assurance is sounded here to the Prophet (sws) that all their silly talk and lame excuses are actually contrivances and deception and it is not possible for him to satisfy them. To convince them through reasoning is not possible at all for even if they see the punishment he is warning them of descend from the sky, they will regard it to be clouds stacked in layers and will satisfy their own selves by saying that these clouds of mercy will irrigate their crops and orchards.

This sentence is also a subtle reference to the incident that took place with regard to the Thamūd. When the punishment they had been warned of hovered over them, even then they did not believe it but reassured themselves by saying: هَذَا غَارٌ مُّمْطَرٌ (this is a cloud that will bring us rain, (46:24)). The implied meaning is that on similar grounds these people too will not believe in the punishment even after they see it looming near. They will only believe it when the punishment ravages them but at that time believing or not will be inconsequential.

It is evident from this discussion that one can only try to convince a person as long as one thinks that he has some doubts and objections in his mind which are hindering his acceptance of the truth. Till that time, it is the obligation of a true preacher to try and dispel these doubts and objections. However, once it becomes evident that the person is actually conniving and contriving in the garb of reasoning and he actually wants to escape the reality by hiding behind its veil, then it is absolutely useless to waste time on him. His matter should be entrusted to God alone.

فَذَرُهُمْ حَتَّى يَلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي فِيهِ يُصْعَقُونَ (٤٥) يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ (٤٦)³⁸

The implication of this verse is that when it has become evident that these people are only plotting and contriving, there is no need to go after them. They should be entrusted to the Day on which the trumpet of Raphael shall knock everyone unconscious. The reference is to the Day

37. And even if they see a fragment of the heavens falling down they would say: "A heap of clouds."

38. So leave them alone till they encounter their Day when they shall stand taken aback. The Day when their guiles will be of no avail to them, nor will they be helped.

which is portrayed thus in Sūrah Hajj: وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَارَىٰ وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكَارَىٰ وَلَٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ (and you shall see mankind reeling like drunkards although not drunk: such shall be the horror of God's torment, (22:2)).

The words لَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ say that on that day neither will their plots and schemes be of any use to them nor will any of their supporters and companions be able to help them. Similarly, their alleged deities and intercessors will be of no avail to them. Everyone will have to face God alone and He will show them all that they had been doing.

وَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عَذَابًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (٤٧)³⁹

The implication of this verse is that there is the punishment of the Hereafter for these wrong-doers; however, before that they will face another one but few of them know of it. This is a reference to the worldly punishment which as per a divine practice was necessarily faced by the people who denied their respective messengers and became adamant on this denial. I have explained this divine practice at various places in this *tafsīr*. This punishment also visited the rejecters of the Quraysh and all of them were humiliated and routed in the life time of the Prophet (sws).

وَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ (٤٨) وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَإِدْبَارَ النُّجُومِ (٤٩)⁴⁰

A directive is given here to the Prophet (sws) in a very affectionate manner to show patience and to wait and at the same time to try to plan to acquire patience.

In the expression وَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ the letter ل after صبر is an indication of the fact that the word patience also encompasses the meaning of waiting. The implied meaning is that he should wait for the decision of his Lord with perseverance. The decision referred to here by the word حُكْم relates to things mentioned above.

The sentence فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا is couched in great affection and love. It means that the Prophet (sws) is always in the eyes of God which implies that he is always under His protection. They can contrive whatever schemes they want to; but they cannot harm him in the slightest way.

The words وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ inform the Prophet (sws) of the way

39. And for these wrongdoers, there is another punishment besides this but most of them know it not.

40. And wait patiently for your Lord's decree. Indeed, you are before Our eyes. And glorify your Lord and praise Him when you rise and glorify Him in the night also and at the declining of the stars too.

through which he can acquire patience: he should be as diligent as he can in prayer, in particular the *tahajjud* prayer. I have explained the meaning of *وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ* in the following verse of Sūrah Shu‘arā’: *الَّذِي يَرَاكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ* (put your trust in the Mighty One, the Merciful, who observes you when you arise, (26:217-218)). Similarly, how the word *حَمْدٌ* qualifies *تسبيح* has also been explained at a relevant place in this *tafsīr*.

With slight variation, the words *وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَإِدْبَارَ النُّجُومِ* also occur thus in Sūrah Qāf: *فَاصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَإِدْبَارَ النُّجُومِ* (so, bear then, with patience what they say and glorify your Lord celebrating His praises and blessings before the rising of the sun and before setting, and glorify Him in the night also, and also after the times of the sun’s descent, (50:40)). Its *tafsīr* can be looked up there. Repeating it here will only add to the bulk.

By the grace of God, I come to the end of this *sūrah’s tafsīr*.
فَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى ذَلِكَ (so gratitude be to God on this).

Raḥmānābād,

15th May, 1977 AD

16th Jamādī al-Awwal 1397 AH